AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A method of marking the location of a tubular joint, the method comprising the steps of:

creating a cavity into an end surface of one of the tubular ends that are to be joined together;

inserting a marker into said cavity; and

subsequently joining the tubular ends.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular ends are joined by welding.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the tubular ends are joined by forge welding.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular ends are joined by a screw thread connector.

5. (Original) The method of any preceding claim, wherein the tubulars have substantially disk shaped end surfaces that are pressed against each other when the tubular ends are joined.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the marker comprises an electronic tag, magnetic or radioactive material.

7. (Original) The method claim 1, wherein the cavity is machined at or near the center of said end surface.

8. (Original) A string of joined tubulars, comprising:

a marker arranged in a cavity adjacent to an end surface of at least one of the tubulars, and wherein the end surface is pressed against or welded to an end surface of an adjacent tubular.

9. (Original) The string of claim 8, wherein said end faces are substantially disk shaped and joined by forge welding.

10. (Original) The string of claim 8, wherein a plurality of joints are provided with markers.

11. (Original) The string of claim 10, wherein each marker transmits a radio, magnetic, radioactive or other detectable signal which is different to the signal transmitted by any other marker.

12. (Original) The string of claim 8, wherein the string is a string of oilfield and/or well tubulars.

13. (New) A method for interconnecting tubulars by forge welding, the method comprising the step of:

shaping the tubular ends that are to be welded together into a sloping configuration wherein the sloping configuration is such that when the tubular ends are heated during the forge welding process the heated tubular ends deform as a result of thermal expansion into a substantially longitudinally oriented cylindrical shape.

14. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the sloping angle of the inner and outer walls of the tubular ends is selected such that the ratio between the average diameter D(t) of the tip of the tubular end and the average diameter D(b) of the base of the tubular end is related to an estimated temperature difference between said tip and base

of the tubular end during the forge welding process and a thermal expansion co-efficient of the steel grade or grades of the tubular end.

15. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein said ratio D(t)/D(b) is between 0.8 and 0.99.

16. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the end face of one of the tubular ends that are to be welded together has a substantially convex shape and the end face of the other tubular has a substantially concave shape.

17. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the tubular ends are machined to a reduced wall thickness in the welding zone.

18. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein tubulars comprise a low grade steel base pipe and a higher grade steel cladding on the inner and/or outer surface of the base pipe and the end faces are shaped such that when the tubular ends are pressed together the end faces of the cladding(s) touch each other before the end faces of the base pipe ends touch each other.

19. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the tubular ends are wedge shaped and the tips of the wedges are formed by the claddings.

20. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein only the adjacent end portions of adjacent low grade steel base pipes are covered with clad metal to allow further machining of said end portions without exposing the base pipes.

21. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein during at least part of the forge welding operation a flushing gas is flushed around the welding zone and at least part of the flushing gas is injected into the welding zone from the uncladded side of the tubular, such that the injected flushing gas can continue to reach the ends of the still spaced base pipes after the claddings have touched each other.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the flushing gas is a reducing flushing gas.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the flushing gas is a non-explosive mixture of a substantially inert gas and a reducing gas.

24. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the substantially inert gas comprises helium, argon, nitrogen, and/or carbon dioxide and the reducing gas comprises hydrogen and/or carbon monoxide.

25. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the non-explosive flushing gas mixture comprises more than 90% by volume of a substantially inert gas and at least 2% by volume of hydrogen.

26. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the tubulars are oilfield and/or well tubulars.